

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT (FONSI)
DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS
PROPOSED COMBINED HEAT AND POWER (CHP) PLANT
DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS LOMA LINDA MEDICAL CENTER (VALLMC)
SAN BERNARDINO COUNTY, CALIFORNIA

Introduction

A Final Environmental Assessment (EA), included herein by reference, was prepared to identify, analyze, and document the potential physical, environmental, cultural, and socioeconomic impacts associated with the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) proposed installation and operation of E85 Fueling Station at the VA Loma Linda Medical Center located at 11201 Benton Street, Loma Linda, California. Preparation of the EA was required in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 ([NEPA]; 42 United States Code [USC] 4321 *et seq.*), the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) Regulations Implementing the Procedural Provisions of NEPA (40 Code of Federal Regulations [CFR] 1500-1508), and 38 CFR Part 26 (*Environmental Effects of the Department of Veterans Affairs Actions*).

1. Purpose of and Need for the Proposed Action

The purpose of the Proposed Action is to install and operate a renewable energy type of fuel sources, specifically E85 Fuel at VALLMC, in Loma Linda, California as well as to meet the goals and objectives of Federal energy requirements per the Energy Policy Act of 2005, Executive Orders (EOs) 13423 and 13514, and the Energy Independence and Security Act of 2007 (EISA). As such, the Proposed Action is needed to assist the VA in complying with identified EOs and the Energy Policy Act of 2005.

2. Description of the Proposed Action and Alternatives

Proposed Action

The VA's Proposed Action is to install and operate E85 Fueling Station at the VALLMC. This action would provide delivery and use of renewable fuel for VALLMC's vehicle fleet. A location near NE corner of the campus has been identified within paved area with berm all around to contain any spillage equivalent to the size of the fuel tank. The site selection considered access for fueling E85 cars and access for delivery truck with minimal obstruction to the flow of traffic and prevent blocking of ambulance and fire department access.

Alternatives Considered

The VA undertook a sequential planning and screening process, seeking reasonable alternatives for the Proposed Action. This process, described in the Final EA, included developing and applying site-specific screening criteria. Through this analysis, the VA identified three technological alternatives for installing an E85 fueling station: 1) installation of an above ground storage tank (AST); 2) installation of an underground storage tank (UST); and 3) conversion of existing AST to E85 fuel.

The Final EA examined in-depth the three alternatives, the aboveground storage tank (AST), underground storage tank (UST) and conversion of existing AST to E85 fuel. Alternatives, defined as follows:

- **Preferred Action Alternative (Proposed Action):** Under the Preferred Action Alternative, the VA would install and operate E85 above ground storage tank (AST) is the action that has least impact to the site and would only need moderate improvement to the site to install the tank and provide convenient access to filling cars and access to delivery truck.
- **Not Preferred Action Alternative:** Underground storage tank (UST) is not a preferred alternative due to extensive impact to the facility during construction with very minimal benefit to the project. The area where the tank will be located still have to be maintained clear at all times and is the most expensive alternative.
- **Not Preferred Action Alternative:** Converting existing 1000 gallon AST is not proffered due to its size and the current need for having regular fuel at the facility.

- **No action alternative:** CEQ regulations prescribe analysis of the No-action Alternative, which serves as the benchmark against the environmental, social and economic effects of the Proposed Action and other reasonable alternatives can be evaluated. In the tiered EA, the benchmark is not to install an alternative E85 fueling station on the Loma Linda VAMC campus. This alternative would not help the VA to meet the sustainability goals of EO 13514 for federal agencies, which include using vehicles that reduce the consumption of petroleum products for fleets of motor vehicles by a minimum of 2% annually through the end of fiscal year 2020, compared to the baseline of fiscal year 2005.

3. Environmental Analysis

The Final EA evaluated potential direct, indirect, and cumulative effects of implementing the three alternatives to: aesthetics; air quality/GHGs; community services and utilities; cultural resources; water resources (floodplains, wetlands, watersheds, rivers, lakes, coastal zones, hydrology, and water quality); geology, topography and soils; land use; the noise environment; biological resources (vegetation, wildlife, and threatened and endangered species); socioeconomics (economy, population, housing, employment, Environmental Justice (EO 12898), Protection of Children (EO 13045), and emergency services); transportation and parking; and solid and hazardous waste.

Potential adverse effects in the areas of air quality/greenhouse gases; utilities; solid and hazardous wastes; and transportation and parking were identified within the Final EA's analysis. Based on the analysis contained in the Final EA, the VA determined that the construction and operation of the proposed E85 Fueling Station under the Preferred Action Alternative will not have significant adverse impacts, either individually or cumulatively, on the physical, biological, or human environments, provided the mitigation measures specified in the Final EA are implemented.

Potential effects from the Proposed Action in the areas of air quality/greenhouse gases; community services and utilities; solid and hazardous wastes; and transportation and parking were identified. Based on the analysis contained in the Final EA, the VA determined that the Proposed Action will not have significant adverse impacts, either individually or cumulatively, on the physical, biological, or human environments, provided the mitigation measures specified in the Final EA are implemented.

Under the Not Preferred Alternative, the Proposed Action would not be implemented. The Final EA did not identify any significant adverse impacts either individually or cumulatively, on the physical, biological, or human environments. This alternative, however, would fail to meet the goals and objectives of the Federal energy requirements.

The EA also examined the potential cumulative effects of implementing each of the considered alternatives. This analysis found that implementation of the Preferred Action Alternative would not result in adverse cumulative impacts to any evaluated resource within the Proposed Action's Region of Influence.

Mitigation

The VA will implement mitigation measures to ensure any impacts are maintained at acceptable, less-than-significant levels, in accordance with the recommendations presented in the Final EA. The VA will also implement Best Management Practices (BMPs) and comply with applicable state and Federal regulatory requirements, as specified in the Final EA, to further minimize effects.

Air Quality: During construction, reasonable measures would be required to prevent unnecessary amounts of particulate matter (i.e., dust) from becoming airborne. Such precautions, typical of all VA construction projects at the VAMC, would include:

- Use of water for control of dust during construction operations, the grading of roads, and the clearing of land;
- Paving of roadways and maintaining them in a clean condition;
- Covering open equipment for conveying or transporting material likely to create objectionable air pollution when airborne; and,
- Promptly removing spilled or tracked dirt or other materials from paved streets.

Cultural Resources: A Confidential Records Search has been performed at the California Historical Resources Information System. The SHPO was consulted regarding impacts to cultural and historical

resources in a letter dated March 8 2013; however, a response from the SHPO has not been received as of the date of this EA. Although the EA concludes that no effect to cultural or historical resources is expected from the Proposed Action, the VAMC must complete SHPO consultation for the Proposed Action prior to construction. If the SHPO determines the Proposed Action may have an adverse effect, the VA will initiate formal consultation to mitigate these effects.

Transportation: The VA will implement traffic-control BMPs during construction to minimize onsite traffic delays or issues.

Utilities: The VA will carefully coordinate and conduct construction to avoid or relocate existing utilities, and to minimize operational effects during construction.

Vegetation and Wildlife: Informal consultation with USFWS and the CADFG was attempted in a letter dated March 8, 2013; however, a response has not been received. Based on the scope of the project, the EA concludes that no effect to vegetation or wildlife is expected from the Proposed Action.

4. Regulations

The Proposed Action will not violate NEPA, the CEQ Regulations, 38 CFR Part 26, or other Federal, state, or local environmental regulations. This will be achieved by implementing the measures summarized above.

5. Commitment to Implementation

The VA affirms their commitment to implement the Final EA and FONSI in accordance with NEPA, the CEQ Regulations, and 38 CFR Part 26. Implementation is dependent on funding. The VA will ensure that adequate funds are requested in future years' budget(s) to achieve the goals and objectives set forth in the Final EA and FONSI, and to fund the commitments described above.

6. Agency and Public Involvement

The VA has consulted with appropriate Federal, state, and local regulatory agencies, and has attempted to consult with federally recognized Native American tribes identified as having ancestral ties to the Loma Linda area, including potentially the Preferred Action Alternative site. This consultation is documented in the Final EA. Concerns expressed by pertinent regulatory agencies have been addressed in the Final EA.

In addition, the VA had published the Draft EA for review at the Loma Linda Public Library located at 25581 Barton Road, Loma Linda for a 30-day public review and comment period by interested parties that ends April 13, 2013. No substantive comments were provided during the public review process.

7. Finding of No Significant Impact

After careful review of the Final EA, I have concluded that implementation of the Preferred Action Alternative would not generate significant controversy or have a significant impact on the quality of the human or natural environment.

Therefore, per the NEPA, the CEQ Regulations, and 38 CFR Part 26, I am signing this FONSI. This analysis fulfills the requirements of the NEPA and the CEQ Regulations. An Environmental Impact Statement will not be prepared.

5/14/13

Date

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